growers and private parties. Besides, STC has also been permitted to export certain quantities of rubber held by them.

US warned India on Provident Protection in Patents Area

1861. SHRI BEKAL UTSAHI:

SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether as reported in *National Herald* of 12th December, 1991 US has warned India to provide a measure of product protection in patents area of pharmaceuticals by 26th February, 1992 to avert retaliatory action;

(b) if so, what specific nature and extent of product protection was desired by US; and

(c) what is Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P CHIDAMBARAM): (a) to (c) Government has noted the news item which appeared in *National Herald* of 12th December, 1991. The Government has not received such a warning from the United States. However, the United States Trade Representative had designated India as a priority country and initiated investigation on 26th May, 1991 under Special 301 provisions of its trade legislation on grounds of perceived inadequacy in the protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights. In particular, in the area of patents, the United States has raised the issue of scope of patentability, uniform duration of term of patents and limitations on the conditions for grant of compulsory licences. Government has drawn the attention of the United States to the fact that this issue is the subject of multilateral trade negotiations in the Uruguay Round which have yet to be concluded.

Visit of India's Trade Delegations to Republics in CIS

1862. SHRI BEKAL UTSAHI:

SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether an Offical delegation was sent to Russia, recently to hold talks with individual Republics in the Commonwealth of Independent States on various issues relating to trade and commerce; and

(b) if so, what are the details of the talks with each Republic including the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b) An official level delegation led by the Foreign Secretary visited Moscow in January, 1992. The delegation held discussions with the Russian Government on different bilateral issues including economic cooperation and trade relations. As a follow-up to this visit, a Russian delegation visited India in the third week of February, 1992. During this visit an Agreement on Trade and Economic cooperation was initialled and is expected to be signed in the near future. A bilateral Trade Protocol for 1992 was also concluded during this visit. Seperately Trade Agreements with Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan have also been concluded. Discussions have also been held with the Republics of Ukraine, Belarus, Azerbaijan and Kirghizstan.

Import of Rubber by Business Houses

1863. SHRI M. A. BABY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that Indian business houses import rubber;

(b) if so, what is the quantity and break-up of rubber imported during the last six months by the business houses;

(c) whether Government of Kerala has requested the Centre to stop all sorts of imports of rubber; and

(d) if so, what steps have been taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b) Indian business houses have imported rubber under various export incentive schemes.

A quantity of 5609 tonnes has been thus imported during July-December, 1991 as revealed from monthly returns furnished by them. Imports by some major manufacturers is as given below:—

	Tonnes
(1) MRF Limited	1391
(2) J.K. Industries	702
(3) CEAT Ltd.	686
(4) Govind Rubber Ltd.	666
(5) Metro Tyres Ltd.	396
(6) Dunlop India Ltd.	344
(7) Vikrant Tyres Ltd.	324
(8) Mittal Meditex (P) Ltd.	312
(9) Enkay (I) Rubber Co. Ltd.	258
(10) Apollo Tyres	211

All others are below 200 tonnes.

(c) and (d) Requests have been received from various interested parties to stop imports of natural rubber. However, it has not been found possible to do away with the facility of importing natural rubber under various export incentive schemes essentially with a view to make India's exports of rubber products competitive in the international market.

Export Earnings through Agricultural Commodities

1864. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to refer to the answer to Unstarred Question 766 given in the Rajya Sabha on 3rd March, 1992 and state:

(a) what are the names of the agricultural commodities that have shown higher export earnings and those which have registered fall in earnings during the past four years; and

(b) what are the major factors affecting fall in the export of the agricultrual commodities?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHEED): (a) and (b) Export of all major agricultural commodities consistently registered higher export earnings except in the case of sugar, wheat and spices. Export of sugar and wheat depended largely on surpluses available after accommodating the domestic demand. Export of spices, in quantitative terms; have been steadily increasing since 1987-88 with a minor decline in 1990-91. The major constraints affecting the export of spices being: (a) increased domestic consumption; (b) availability of better and remunerative prices in the country; (c) low productivity level in India leading to higher cost of production; and (d) fall in international prices.

Trade agreement between India and Russia

1865. SHRI SARADA MOHANTY:
SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA:
SHRIMATI MIRA DAS:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the recent trade agreement between Russia and India have accepted common denomination convertible currency exchange rate with Rupee and Rouble currency;

(b) if so, whether this arrangement is only for this calendar year;

(c) what was the trade transaction between the two countries during last three years; and

(d) what is the agreed trade during the current year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Russia, as an independent country of the Commonwealth of Independent States came into existence on 8.12.1991. As such, details of its trade transactions with India during the last three years are not available.

(d) In terms of the Indo-Russian Protocol for 1992 trade during the current year is targetted at US $2200 million against Rupee Payment. Additionally the Protocol permits transactions by way of counter trade, barter, payments in freely